

Preparations Underway for Successful HCST Reopening



Following months of virtual and distanced learning, the Hudson County Schools of Technology is excited to welcome students back into the classroom beginning on April 19, 2021. As part of a hybrid schedule, students who opt for in-person learning will be in the classroom two days a week and attend class virtually three days a week.

“Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hudson County Schools of Technology has worked around the clock to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff,” said **Superintendent Amy Lin-Rodriguez**. “As a district, we have taken extraordinary steps that have allowed us to confidently begin reopening our classrooms. The past year has certainly posed its challenges, but I’m incredibly proud of all that we have continued to accomplish despite the obstacles presented.”

During this time, no more than 50% of the student population will be in the building at a time and desks will be spaced in accordance with CDC guidelines. Thermal imaging temperature checks will be conducted daily, increased cleaning will be done, students will be discouraged from gathering in large groups during lunch and designated staff will be assigned to ensure all social distancing guidelines are being followed. Additionally, the district has been working closely with staff to connect them with vaccination opportunities and is providing them with any additional resources necessary for a safe reopening.

“Earlier this year, HCST was among one of the first districts in the state to return students to the classroom and we’re excited to do so again this month,” said **School Safety Specialist John Shinnick**. “The health and safety of our entire district has remained our top priority and with additional resources at our disposal to combat this virus, we’re looking forward to slowly returning to a more normal way of learning.”

To stay up to date about HCST’s reopening plan, visit [hcstonline.org/covid-19-information](https://www.hcstonline.org/covid-19-information)

HCST Spotlight: Celebrating CTE Month

February is Career and Technical Education month and we asked some of our alumni to reflect on their times at HCST, share stories about where they are today and provide some advice to current students. Here are a handful of their responses.



Jamie Roberson

Jamie is a 2016 County Prep High School graduate working in the nursing field as a patient care technician. It was during her time at HCST that she found an interest in the medical field and knew it was the career path she wished to pursue. Her advice to current students: make wise choices and choose to study something that interests you.



Chynna DeStefano

Chynna is a 2008 graduate of County Prep High School who works as a Cost Accounting Manager for Ralph Lauren and is a sole proprietor wedding photographer. During her senior year, HCST helped connect her with an internship at Hudson City Savings Bank where she became interested in finance. This helped shape her career and encourages students to participate in CTE because it gives them the opportunity to experience the professional setting before even graduating high school.



Sabrina Fabara

Sabrina is a physician and 2008 graduate of County Prep High School. As a Medical Science major, she completed high school with college credits and an EMS certification. She believes CTE is important because it helps high school students plan their future careers while also working hands on throughout the process.



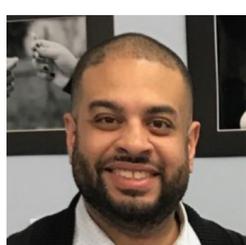
Michelle Nunez-Garcia

Michelle is a 2016 High Tech High School graduate who is currently in her first year of medical school. As an HCST dance major, she was eager to get up for school everyday because she knew she was going to a place where her opinions were acknowledged, validated and developed by her teachers. She learned to cope with stress by sharing thoughts and emotions with her classmates. Her advice to current students: trust the process and never be discouraged.



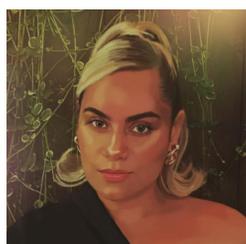
Natasha Borrero Billyer

Natasha is an Attorney and 2005 graduate of County Prep High School's Business Program. HCST prepared her for college and ultimately her career because she learned not only out of the textbook, but also through hands-on experiences. She believes CTE and Vocational Education is important because students are taught skills that you can use beyond the classroom.



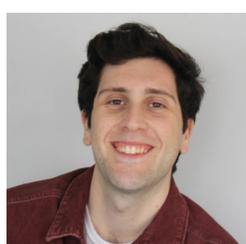
Thurman Carey

Thurman is a 1999 graduate of County Prep High School's Allied Health (Pre-Med Science) Program and currently works as an Education and Mental Health Teacher at his alma mater. As a student, he discovered a number of different career paths that would allow him to help others. He had teachers who cared more than he could have ever imagined and he strives to provide his students with the same learning experience. He says in a world that keeps pushing students to make commitments for their future, having the chance to experience a true glimpse of these fields is invaluable.



Gabriela Mendoza

Gabriela is a 2014 graduate of County Prep High School who studied Graphic Design and currently owns her own design firm: [Gab's Gold Design](#). As a student at HCST, she was given the opportunity to develop personal and professional development skills, like community service, fundraising, finance and travel. Today, she still credits County Prep and her instructor, Mr. Mattaliano, for going above and beyond to give her the necessary resources to succeed.



Zach Canonico

Zach is a 2017 graduate of High Tech High School who majored in Musical Theatre and is currently an actor, writer and senior at NYU. It was at HCST where he first realized that art wasn't just a hobby or extracurricular activity, but could also be a potential career path for himself. He says CTE gives students the opportunity to explore beyond the classroom and without that experience, he isn't sure he would have followed his passion and made the career choice he did.



Ana Ramos

Ana is a 2020 graduate of County Prep High School and is already accomplishing great things in the field of design. As a student in Kean University's Graphic Design Program, Ana secured a paid internship working with Estate Entertainment. She recently had one of her designs featured on a billboard in Times Square.



Elliott Sanchez

Elliott is a 2013 graduate of County Prep High School and recently appeared on Gordon Ramsay's Hell's Kitchen. During his senior year, Elliott decided he wanted to follow his passion and pursue a career in Culinary Arts. He attended Hudson County Community College and worked his way through the ranks in the kitchen. At just 24 years old, Elliott now owns his own business and credits his instructors at County Prep, specifically Chef Collins, for believing in him and helping develop his talents.



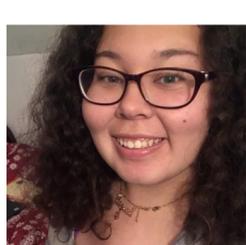
Justine Walker

Justine is a 2009 graduate of County Prep High School's Business program who currently works in Finance as an Accountant. She credits CTE for opening the doors to her current job because it provided her with the confidence she needed to succeed and believes it helps students explore different aspects of careers early on.



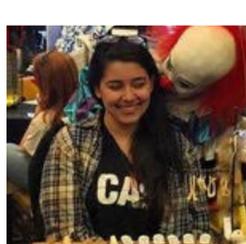
Apolonia Guerrero

Apolonia is a Teacher, Art Professor and 2012 graduate of High Tech High School's AACT program. During her time at HCST, she felt appreciated as a student and says her instructors inspired her to follow in their footsteps and become an Art Teacher. CTE is important, she says, because it combines technology and basic skills that provides an invaluable experience in multiple different aspects of life.



Stefania Greczylo

Stefania is an Honors and Dean's List student at New Jersey City University and a 2019 graduate of County Prep High School's Early Childhood Education program. In her time at HCST, she said she gained essential hands on experience that helped her develop the confidence and skills necessary to become a successful educator. Having a headstart in her career has brought her so much joy because she has found her passion and strives to become the best teacher possible.



Brittany Graziosi

Brittany is a 2007 Graduate of County Prep High School's Studio Arts Program. She currently owns her own business focused on costume jewelry fabrication and jewelry making. She believes some people learn best through hands-on experience and that early vocation education allows students to get their feet wet in a career path of trade. She employs many of the skills she learned at HCST into her current career.

HCST and Jersey City Sign Agreement to Build New High School



Last month, the Hudson County Schools of Technology, the City of Jersey City, Hudson County and The Liberty Science Center have signed a formal agreement to begin building a brand new, state of the art high school. As part of the SciTech Scity project, the new county school will be built adjacent to Liberty Science Center and offer robust, skill-centric science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) courses to students in grades 9 through 12.

"Hudson County is home to some of our state's most talented students, and we are committed to providing them with the innovative and creative educational resources they need to achieve success," said **Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise**. "The school at SciTech Scity will undoubtedly expose our students to opportunities they would not otherwise have and I'm excited to soon see students walking the halls of this state-of-the-art facility."

Liberty Science High School will be part of the planned 30-acre innovation campus designed to be a "mini city of the future" and a technological hub for students, innovators, entrepreneurs, and scientists. As part of the agreement, HCST will operate the school, Jersey City will provide \$2 million annually in school operating costs, Liberty Science Center will contribute nearly \$3.5 million towards construction of the facility and the Hudson County Improvement Authority will serve as the designated developer of the project.

"The Hudson County Schools of Technology is proud to partner with Jersey City and the Liberty Science Center to foster creative and unique learning experiences for our students," said **Superintendent Amy Lin-Rodriguez**. "The vision for this school mirrors our district's mission to provide students with opportunities to succeed beyond the classroom and we look forward to continue working collaboratively with our partners throughout the remainder of this process."



Unemployed because of COVID? **FREE** training now available at HCST

Online Training Options Include:

- Child Development Associate Training
- Microsoft Excel 2019 Certification Training (Vouchers Included)
- Microsoft Word 2019 Certification Training (Vouchers Included)
- OMCA Content Marketing Associate (Vouchers Included)
- OMCA Social Media Associate (Voucher Included)
- Professional Bookkeeping with QuickBooks 2019 (Software Included)
- Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA) (Voucher Included)
- Clinical Dental Assistant
- ICD-10 Medical Coding
- AutoCAD 2021 Certified User (Voucher Included)
- CompTIA A+ Certification Training (Vouchers Included)
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)
- CompTIA IT Fundamentals (Voucher Included)
- Teacher's Aide with ParaPro Prep

Contact info:
dislocatedworker@hcstonline.org
201-631-6348

Department of Labor Eligibility:

- ★ N.J. resident and at least 18 yrs. old
- ★ Proof of legal Status –Passport or Green card and SS#
- ★ High School diploma or GED or equivalent
- ★ Proof of address –NJ State ID
- ★ NJ Unemployment claim if last year / current
- ★ Available to start working upon program completion.



New Lead Abatement Program Offered at HCST

Hudson Technical and the Hudson County Career Development Center, operated by the Hudson County Schools of Technology, have established a unique partnership with the Jersey City Employment and Training Program to offer a lead abatement certification program to local residents. Jersey City's Department of Health and Human Services is allocating funds through a New Jersey State Department of Community Affairs grant to offer the four week course free to eligible individuals, with priority being given to minority and Jersey City-based contractors.

The course is being taught by NAETI LLC, whose parent company Lew Corp. will help assist contractors with job placement opportunities upon completion of the program.

In order to qualify for the program, certified contractors must be licensed and insured. Individuals interested in applying for the program can contact Katrice Thomas at 551-222-4323. For more information about the course work, applicants can email Alicia Abraham at HUDSONTECHNICAL@HCSTONLINE.ORG or 201-662-6791. The course will run for four consecutive Saturdays at the Earl W. Byrd Center in Jersey City. Additional information about the program and how to enroll can be found online by visiting HCSTONLINE.ORG/HUDSONTECHNICAL

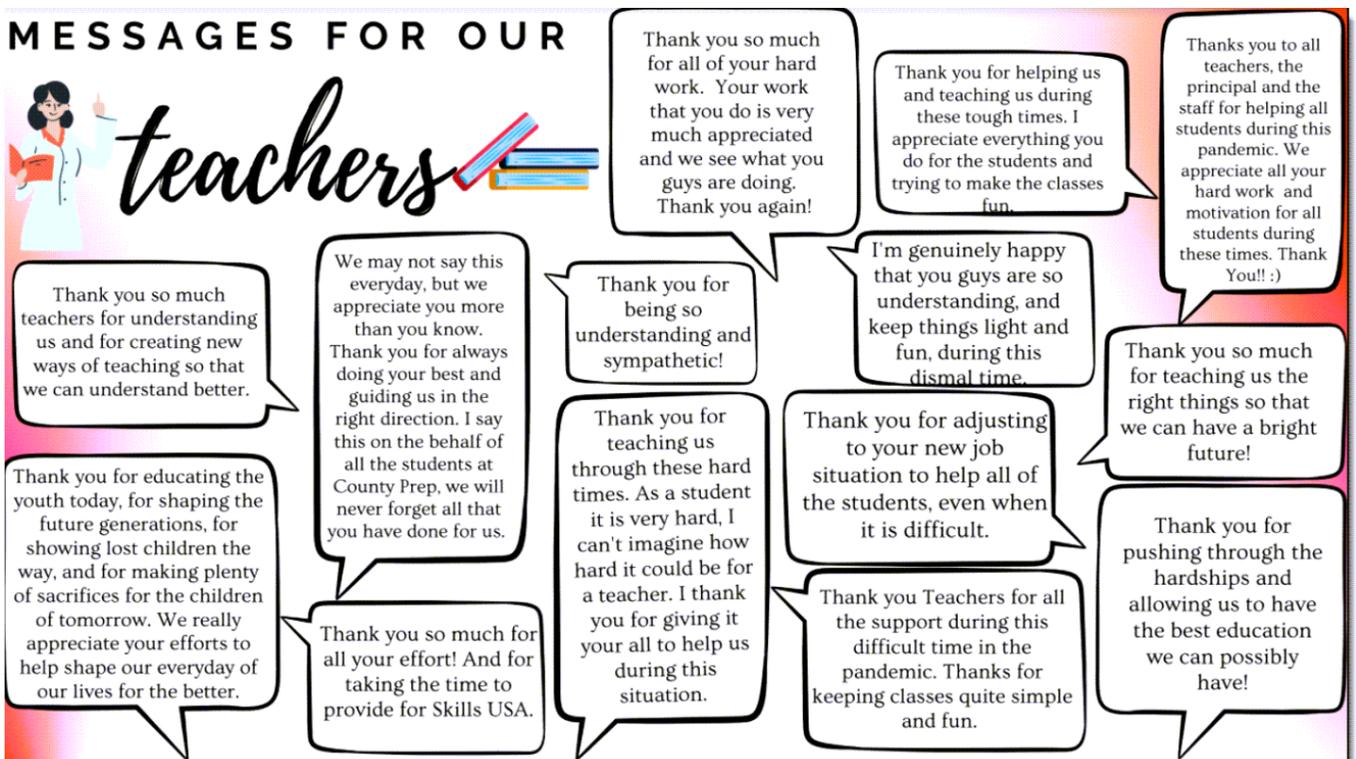
Siblings First 2021 Graduates of TASC Prep



Siblings Mariam Awawda, 16, and Ahmad Awawda, 17, are the first graduates to complete the 2020-2021 Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) Preparation Program. Both have already passed their final tests and received their New Jersey issued High School Diploma. Mariam is currently working in a paid internship she secured through HCST and studying education at Hudson County Community College. Ahmad will be starting his paid internship soon and plans to apply for Bergen Community College's nursing program.

To learn more about TASC Prep, visit: hcstonline.org/tasc-test/tasc-prep

SkillsUSA Week Gratitude Messages for County Prep Teachers



As part of SkillsUSA Week, County Prep SkillsUSA members organized "Messages to Our Teachers" on Tuesday, February 9th. The day was dubbed Give Back Day - "A day to rally around our school and community by focusing on ways for our chapter to give back." For the Give Back Day project, SkillsUSA President Aashtha Patel and community service member Varsha Kumar organized and formatted the messages to display their appreciation and thank the teachers, principal, and staff for teaching us and helping us to adjust to this new situation due to the pandemic.

Students Produce, Record Original Soundtrack



County Prep Music/Audio Technology students Michelle Rizalde (M.AR.Z) and Joan Visitacion (ANN) produced an original song as part of their studies under the direction of their instructor Wilkis Figueroe. The song is titled "031320 (Better Day)" and has been viewed nearly 500 times on YouTube alone.

[Click here to listen!](#)

High Tech Student Turns Passion for Nutrition Into Business



Following the unexpected death of his father in 2017, High Tech BioMed student Henry Jensen-Lim took an interest in learning more about nutrition and sustainable food systems. He started to find that many people living in urban communities lack consideration for how their food is processed and after spending time on a farm and seeing agricultural practices first-hand started [FedDirect](#), Jersey City's first farm-to-table beef delivery service.

Henry, along with his business partners, began building their ranch in 2019, the hardest thing he has ever done. After working long hours between classes, FedDirect began selling in December

2020. The cows are raised on 80 acres of land, are grass fed and antibiotic and hormone free, with beef packages being completely customizable.

Henry joined the HCST community as a student at Explore Middle School and says the district has established a culture of self expression that has fostered creativity in him, allowing him to pursue his ambitions to the fullest.

This spring, FedDirect will be selling their beef at multiple Jersey City farmers markets this season, including the Grove Street Farmers Market.

Explore Middle School Student Wins National Museum of Education Contest



Explore Middle School sixth grade student Reda Jelloid recently won the National Museum of Education's Student Ideas for a Better America contest for his portable waste to energy converter.

Student Ideas for a Better America seeks to encourage the learning, insight, creativity, and workmanship of America's students by recognizing and rewarding their accomplishments. Students are encouraged to enter any idea for a new way to demonstrate an educational concept, an idea for a new product, or an improvement for an existing product or procedure.

"I heard about this contest from Mr. Dunphy," said **Reda Jelloid**. "He helped me by giving me some ideas and advice. We had Google Meets to show him my invention, review my essay, and to go over the application process. My Waste to Energy converter works is that the suction tube at the front collects trash. The Synova energy converter inside removes the inert glass, metal, and rock from the garbage, and then uses the remaining bio and plastic waste to produce gas. This powers turbines inside the machine to produce electricity. I wanted to compete in this competition because of my mom. She pushed me to work on it and I also wanted to be productive while I've been sitting at home."

Reda will receive a \$100 prize for winning the contest and will be featured on the Student for a Better America website and podcast.

"At Explore Middle School we encourage students to pursue passion projects, both in and out of the classroom," said **Principal Allyson Krone**. "Reda participated in this contest not for academic credit or for an assignment in a class; he participated because he embodies the HCST philosophy that interest drives learning. I couldn't be prouder."



Calling All Job Seekers

JOB FAIR



**Wednesday
May 12th**

**5 PM - 7 PM
(Rain or Shine)**

**Social Distancing
& Face Masks
Required for ALL**

Looking for a job? ● Want to learn a trade? ● Looking to network? ● Employers in various fields will be recruiting!

Location:
HCST Parking Lot/Gym
Frank J. Gargiulo Campus
One High Tech Way
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Round-Trip Bus Transportation Provided by HCST from the Following Locations:
Hudson County One-Stop - 48th Street & Kennedy Blvd., Union City
HCST-County Prep High School - 525 Montgomery Street, Jersey City
Jersey City Employment & Training - 398 Martin Luther King Dr., Jersey City

Come prepared to interview ● Bring 5-10 copies of your resume ● Neat attire recommended ● Free parking

Register NOW Online to Attend!



SCAN ME

Employers Interested in Attending, Please Call: (201) 369-5205 Ext. 3756

Staying Healthy At Home

In an effort to help faculty and staff stay healthy while staying home, HCST has launched a Virtual Wellness Program. These live workouts are intended to both motivate and provide a sense of normalcy during these difficult times. Now more than ever, taking care of our physical and mental health is essential.

Anyone interested in participating in the programs can visit:

<https://sites.google.com/hcstonline.org/hcst-wellness>

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Hudson County Executive
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Nicholas Fargo, *Business Administrator*
John Shinnick, *Assistant Business Administrator*

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