

Greater Commonwealth Virtual School



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greater Commonwealth Virtual School Celebrates Successful Launch of Hadley Support Center

Center Now Open for Both Middle and High School Students



Greater Commonwealth Virtual School students work on a puzzle at the Hadley Support Center. The new in-person satellite location opened on Sept. 19. (Photo courtesy Greater Commonwealth Virtual School)

GREENFIELD -- Special Education Director Darlene Thorpe is pleased to announce that the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School has formally opened the Hadley Support Center, the school's new in-person satellite location for students in need of additional support and instruction.

The Hadley Support Center is the school's new brick-and-mortar location, which officially opened on Sept. 19 of this year. It is designed to meet additional needs of students beyond the exclusively virtual model.

Located at 1 Mill Valley Road in Hadley, the Center serves students at both the middle school and high school levels.

It is the first full-time, in-person learning center for GCVS students. The school had a one-year pilot program for a satellite support center in Leydon prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the space wasn't optimal for the school's needs and the location wasn't central enough given student demographics. When a location in Hadley became available for lease in March of 2020 the school acted quickly to secure it, with the plan

moving forward as restrictions relating to the pandemic began to ease up last year.

The Center is a place for students with special needs or on Individualized Education Programs (IEP's), but also serves those students who may just need additional support.

"Our goal from the start was to establish a safe and welcoming environment for all students, and I believe we have done that," Hadley Support Center Coordinator Kris Provost said. "We try to make it so the students take ownership of the space. They took to it right away, and have proven how serious they are about using the space to its fullest potential. It allows them to find a balance between being in a social setting with their peers and also in an academic environment.

While the pandemic made it difficult for many students to find a sense of routine in their daily lives, the Center provides a sense of structure for students and gives them a space they can call their own.

Both high school and middle school students operate on a set schedule that features two days in the Center and three days of virtual education. The two grade levels alternate so that only one group is in the Center at a time.

There are currently 10 high school students, and middle school numbers are increasing as well.

Especially for the senior students, the Center provides a place where they can learn about and explore real-world opportunities through internships and guest speakers.

"It shows students the different areas of education, as well as exposing them to the various tools they will need to succeed in the real world in a very tangible way," Provost said.

The Center also encourages students to think broadly about their lives and their place in the world. One of the ways they have been able to do so is through a "word of the month" that began this month. For November, the Center's word is "integrity."

"It gets students to think about their world and discuss these topics with their peers," Provost said. "The students bring so much to the discussion and have really taken ownership of it. Future words will seek to get them to think about their world in different ways, and the responsibilities and challenges that go with being an adult."

The Center also seeks to promote mindfulness, healthy living and self discipline, with

the ultimate goal of helping students become better advocates for themselves.

Eligibility

The Hadley Support Center is available for any middle school or high school student currently enrolled in GCVS. Any student who is within a reasonable commutable distance is eligible, and busing is available.

Last year GCVS began reaching out to families of students to encourage enrollment in the Center (and in many cases, working with the students directly), and any other student or family wishing to learn more is encouraged to inquire.

For more information about the Hadley Support Center, call GCVS 413-475-3879 or email Kris Provost at kprovost@gcvs.org.

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Students take a break and play a game of cards at the Center. (Photo courtesy Greater Commonwealth Virtual School)



Students work on an arts and crafts project. (Photo courtesy Greater Commonwealth Virtual School)



Students prepare food in the Center's kitchen area. (Photo courtesy Greater Commonwealth Virtual School)

A message from the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School

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