

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

As we wanted to get our previous message out as quickly as possible so as to allow time for child care and work arrangements for tomorrow, I now want to provide a bit more information regarding our switch to remote learning for the day.

First, while I certainly understand the frustration and anger that this has caused many of you, I want to thank those of you who have written in or called with questions and suggestions for how we can work together to keep our students in school as that remains our highest priority this year. With 10 drivers out tomorrow (due to a variety of reasons including illness, quarantine, positive cases, etc.) and each of them being assigned to at least 4 runs during the day, we simply are unable to cover this many runs with office staff and mechanics who typically step in when we have absences. However, please know that ***we fully expect that we will be back to a regular in-person schedule on Monday, October 18*** as most of the drivers who will be out tomorrow will return on Monday.

Second, the bus driver shortage issue is not unique to our district and we continue to take steps to compete with other districts in recruiting new drivers. One step that the Board of Education recently took, for example, was to raise the hourly rate for our drivers in training. This step was taken as the process to become a certified driver now takes 8-10 weeks and we wanted to incentivize individuals to stay in the preparation program through to the end. Said differently, recruiting drivers is an ongoing and lengthy challenge that cannot be solved for overnight. That said, we will continue our recruitment work and encourage anyone who might be interested in becoming a bus driver to contact our transportation department. Additionally, we will continue to work on other options for transportation including a determination of how many of you would be able to transport your child (and perhaps others from your neighborhood) on future such days should we experience them.

Finally, if you have additional questions on this or related topics, please contact us at schoolopening@bscsd.org. If you have specific questions about your child's program, please contact their building principal so that you are able to get answers as quickly as possible.

Thanks very much.

Ken Slentz

Superintendent of Schools

Ballston Spa Central School District