

Updates from the District Office  
November 19, 2021

Dear BSCSD Parents and Caregivers – A few items for your information today.

## 1. Communications

- a. **ThoughtExchange** – Thank you to all who have participated in our three ThoughtExchange surveys so far. While the [current survey](#) on the effectiveness of our communications is open until November 22, we have already been able to take some of your suggestions and put them in place. This is one of the many benefits of this tool which we will continue to use throughout the year. We will share a summary of the exchange, including the suggestions we implemented, after the exchange closes.
- b. **The Scottie Scoop** – For common questions, concerns, and in response to various social media posts and correspondence that we receive, we have started [The Scottie Scoop](#) in which we provide answers and references to resources to better ensure that our conversations remain informed and fact-based. Please visit this site each week for updates and utilize our form for submitting questions or concerns that you might have.
- c. **Snow Day Notifications** – Just as we have with recent notices of bus driver shortages, our school closure notices on snow days will utilize the many communications tools that we have at our disposal to notify you on mornings when the weather will not permit us to safely open our schools. While we will utilize our School Messenger text, email, and phone contacts, please remember to check our website, our Facebook page, and local media on these mornings as well.

## 2. COVID Updates

- a. **COVID Protection Protocols** - Yesterday the New York State Department of Health, Public Health and Health Planning Council and their Committee on Codes Rules and Legislation met to address two emergency regulations which are set to expire at or near the end of November. The committee extended both emergency regulations for an additional 90 days beyond their current expiration. The revised regulations are expected to be posted shortly. As the number of positive cases and related quarantines continue to increase in the county and around the state, please be sure to continue to follow the recommended routines including staying home when sick, washing hands with frequency, sneezing/coughing into your elbow, avoiding large gatherings, etc.
- b. **COVID Vaccination Options** – If you are interested in finding options for vaccination for your child, please see the information on our [Coping with COVID](#) webpage.

3. **Bus Driver Shortage Days** – In an effort to avoid days where we are unable to transport all of our students who rely on district transportation, we are continuing our recruiting efforts to attract

new drivers. The Board of Education recently appointed a new driver and we have more in the pipeline that we will be recommending approval of at upcoming meetings. In the meantime, with thanks to our team and many of you who have offered great suggestions, we continue to refine our approach to these days in how we rotate buses to minimize impact on our students and families, how we communicate so that families are able to prepare for such days, and how we might be able to still provide full transportation even if it means that some students are arriving late. One concern about our communications process in these situations that a number of you have commented on is to how we send our messages to all parents instead of just those impacted. In some cases we are able to target our sends when we have sufficient lead time as we have to load the student list from each unavailable bus route into our School Messenger system. This is generally not possible in the mornings as we typically do not have the final driver roster for the day set until 5:40am and our goal is to have all information out as close to 6:00am as we are able. Our default therefore, is to send to all. We know this is terribly inconvenient and are continuing to work to refine this. However, we will continue to keep you updated on any adjustments to our evolving model.

4. **Student Drama Performance** – This weekend we are very excited to have our High School Troupe present our production of Puffs. Times and ticket information can be found [HERE](#). Please be aware that masks are required to attend these events.

5. **Winter Sports Season Spectators** – We are equally excited to welcome back winter sports for the 2021-22 season and are currently planning to have no restrictions on attendance for spectators. We are watching the data points noted in our [Operations Plan](#), however, and may change this if necessary to ensure that we can continue to maximize in person teaching and learning. For those who would like to see our student athletes compete but are not comfortable attending these events, we will be [live streaming](#) a number of games and matches.

6. **Grades 3 – 8 NYS Score Reports** – Over the next few days parents of students in grades 3-8 who took the NYS assessments last spring will receive the score reports in the mail. Unlike prior years, these reports are very limited in their use due to the many issues associated with test administration including the very low number of students who participated in the testing program and because the test itself was limited only to Part 1. For more information please see the [NYS Department of Education website](#) announcement on the results. With this information in mind, however, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school for discussions about how any areas of concern that you might have are being addressed this year.

7. **Employment Opportunities at BSCSD** – The Ballston Spa Central School District is seeking individuals to work at the district in a variety of positions. Currently openings are available for Teaching Assistants, School Aides, Special Education Aides, Cleaners and School Bus Drivers. Additional information is on our website – click [HERE](#) - or call (518) 884-7195 ext. 1398.

We continue to be grateful to you all for your continued partnership in ensuring that we can provide the best possible experiences for each of our students even in these very trying times. Should you have any question on any of this information or questions in general, please connect with us at [schoolopening@bscsd.org](mailto:schoolopening@bscsd.org).

Thanks very much and enjoy the weekend and the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. Stay safe and be well.

Ken Slentz  
Superintendent of Schools

Ballston Spa Central School District