

Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Community Members:

As I noted in my communications with you last Friday, Governor Cuomo has announced that schools *may* reopen, but that it was up to school district superintendents to make the final decision as to whether they *will* reopen so long as the regional infection rates remain low. I am writing today to announce the very difficult decision that I have made in this regard. In short, while our first day of instruction for all students remains Monday, September 14, ***in-person learning at the Ballston Spa Central School District will not begin until Monday, October 5.***

I am incredibly grateful for the amount of time, energy, and the thinking that our many planning teams have devoted in an attempt to allow us to open safely for in-person learning on September 14. However, there are still far too many variables and changes in information at this time for me to say with the necessary confidence that I can keep our students and our staff healthy and safe while also keeping them properly focused on teaching and learning.

By announcing this decision today, our intent is to give parents as much time as possible to arrange for the additional child care; for our staff to participate in trainings that focus on strengthening our remote learning program plan; to continue to monitor and learn from the information coming out of schools across the country who are already opening and seeing a number of challenges in doing so; and to continue our preparations for in-person learning to begin on October 5. To this end, our remote learning registration form will not be required at this time, but will be sent as we get closer to October 5 if we are allowed to reopen.

Next week, we will hold three community forums to further discuss our rationale, the details of our remote learning plan, and what possibilities might exist for providing childcare and food service for our families. We will also be working to adjust our plans and postings to reflect this change in direction. For the forums, you may submit questions to the schoolopening@bscsd.org mailbox with the subject line “Forum Question” or you may submit the questions via the chat feature of the WebEx platform. More details are posted on our website regarding the dates, times, and format of the forums.

Please know that as difficult as it was for me to make this decision, I fully understand that the difficulties that this presents for many of our families is even greater. We will work diligently over the coming weeks to try to find solutions that will be as helpful as possible while also keeping the health and safety of our students, staff, and community at the forefront of every decision that we make.

Sincerely,

Ken Slentz
Superintendent of Schools
Ballston Spa CSD