

24 July, 2020

Dear Parents and Community Members:

As a follow up to last week's *Update*, we are continuing to work on the development of a reopening model that meets the requirements set forth from the NYS Departments of Health (DOH) and Education (SED) as well as our own requirements for a safe and healthy school environment. In the first instance, the Education Department guidance requires that the following factors must be considered for determining the availability of in-person instruction:

- *Ability to maintain appropriate social distance.* According to the SED Guidance, this means “keeping a six foot space between yourself and others. Schools are to develop, implement, and enforce social distancing in all school facilities, and on school grounds including transportation<sup>1</sup>.” In our schools, for example, while a class of 24 students in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom may have been the norm during a regular school year, many of those classes can now only fit between 9 and 12 students under the distancing rules. This means that we would need at least 2 classrooms to accommodate one 5<sup>th</sup> grade class. While some districts with decreasing enrollment are able to bring in more students under these rules, our enrollment has been very consistent over the past years and therefore we are more limited in this regard. This is just one of a number of areas in which our plan will likely look different than another area districts due to different circumstances.
  - *Planning for Remote Learning* – If the Governor allows us to reopen in September, we understand that families will need the flexibility to make certain choices because of personal circumstances or concerns. These choices include whether to send your child (ren) to attend in-person or continue their learning remotely. In my next update I will share details on how we will be improving upon our remote learning model that was used under the emergency conditions in the spring.
- *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cloth face masks availability.* Face coverings and masks are required for both students and staff at no cost to them and extras must be kept in stock in the case of someone forgetting their mask or having to get a new mask for a variety of other reasons. PPE is to be made available for certain staff under certain conditions.
- *Availability of Safe Transportation* – Because social distancing is required on school buses (as are face coverings/masks), our capacity is limited here similar to our classrooms. For example, a bus route with a full sized bus that typically picks up 45 students would now need at least two buses to transport that number, as we can only carry up to 22 students with masks and distancing rules in place. Further, we have a number of buses that are committed to routes for students who are homeless as defined by the federal government or for students with disabilities from our district who attend out-of-district schools. As a result, our in-person plan depends heavily on our ability to transport a certain number of students.

To help us determine what our in-person and remote models of instruction will ultimately look like; how many drivers, buses and routes we need; how we will set up food services for those

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf>, pg. 28

students who do attend in-person instruction, and how we will meet the requirement of health screening of all students each day, each of our schools will be sending out a survey in which we ask for your name and your intentions in the following areas:

1. Whether you will send your child (ren) to school for in-person instruction based on details that we will provide or whether you will choose to have them learn through remote instruction;
2. If you are sending your child (ren) to school, will you utilize the school bus or will you be dropping them off at school based on details of what the bus ride will look like and what a drop off routine will look like;
3. If you are sending your child (ren) to school, will you utilize the school lunch program based on details that we will provide; and
4. Whether you have a smart phone and consistent cellular access at home.

There are a substantial number of other details that we must attend to in creating our plan, the first version of which will be posted on July 31, 2020. This posted plan will *technically* comply with all of the state-based requirements and address the majority of our internal challenges, (see our Models analysis outline [HERE](#) for other challenges). From there, we will begin to move towards an *operational plan* as we settle more details (e.g., number of available bus drivers and teachers), as we adjust to any changes and/or clarifications from the state and/or our attorneys, as we receive feedback from our dedicated mailbox (see below) and as we receive input from building-based meetings. These building-based meetings will include administration, faculty, staff, and parents who will be selected by principals in coordination with our PTA leadership from each building.

As we move forward, I invite you to review the information posted on our School Reopening webpage via [www.bsccd.org](http://www.bsccd.org) (see the **Quick Links** section). There will be an increasing number of documents here including our Hybrid Model analysis document which will allow you to see the constraints that we are considering as we review each option. Next week we will be adding a *Frequently Asked Questions* document which will continue to be updated as we receive additional questions, receive additional information, or clarify information based on feedback that we receive. Once you have reviewed these documents and you have additional ideas, questions, and/or suggestions, please send an email to our dedicated email box at [schoolopening@bsccd.org](mailto:schoolopening@bsccd.org).

Until next week!

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