

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

We are excited to continue our planning for the upcoming school year focusing on having all students back to in-person learning each day of the week. As we all know, last year was full of challenges both large and small as we dealt with the ongoing changes in requirements and plans. It was dizzying to say the least! However, as a community we worked through each one of those challenges together all the while learning a great deal about what can work and what does not always work so well for our students despite our best efforts. Throughout it all, our collective focus on the health and safety of our students was critical and it will be again this year. Despite having fewer requirements currently in place, we will need an even greater focus on the physical and mental health of our children this year so that we, in turn, can focus on providing excellent opportunities for in-person teaching and learning. While we are spending, and will continue to spend, countless hours on phone calls, video conferencing, in in-person meetings, and responding to parent questions and concerns as we develop the details of the *Framework*, as a community we are going to have to come together and agree to set certain differences aside so that we minimize or eliminate disruptions to our students' learning. The history of this district suggests that this can and will be done.

With this in mind, here are a few highlights from the updated *Reopening Plan Framework* which can be found on our [website](#).

1. **Masking:** Thanks to the over 2,300 of you who completed our Fall 2021 Reopening Survey. As expected, the results on the masking question were varied amongst groups represented. When we combined all groups, we saw the following results:
  - a. 34% wanting masks at all times;
  - b. 27% wanting no masks while in the buildings;
  - c. 19% wanting masks while moving about the buildings, but not when seated;
  - d. 12% wanting masks at all times only for unvaccinated students and staff; and
  - e. 7% wanting masks only for unvaccinated students and staff while moving about in the buildings, but not when seated.

We are keeping this information in mind as we move forward with our planning which currently includes the following:

- **While Indoors** – The District has not made a decision on these requirements yet. Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul who will take over as Governor on August 24 has now stated on a number of occasions that she is in favor of mask mandates and so we will have to see if she and the Department of Health will make this a requirement. Even if she does not implement such a requirement, we believe that there is good value in taking the time between now and September 1 when a final decision will be made to have additional conversations, gather additional data on our reopening measures, and make the best possible decisions for how we will open and keep open our schools for the fall so that all students have access to in-person learning five days a week.
- **While on Buses** – This is a federal requirement and so all students and staff must be masked while on our buses.
- **While Outdoors** – No masks are required outside (Unless students and staff are in large groups that cannot be distanced).

2. **Full-time Remote Learning:** This state requirement from last year has since been lifted. While we may still use remote learning in certain situations (large groups of students being quarantined, a school or the District is shut down under order from the county or state) it will not be available as an option for full time learning this year as all of our efforts will be on in-person teaching and learning.
3. **Social Distancing:** Three feet of distance between students and six feet of distance between students and staff will be in place whenever possible.
4. **Athletics and Extracurricular Clubs:** These will continue to run as in pre-pandemic years and we are working on specific details at this time.
5. **Quarantining Rules:** These are still being worked out by the Saratoga County Office of Public Health, but the CDC has made an exception to quarantining for K-12 students who are properly masked during the time of exposure to an infected student.
6. **Changes to Our Plan:** We have designed our *Framework* to work off a set of measures that are likely to change periodically. We will make necessary changes when this happens, all the while seeking to maximize opportunities for our students while minimizing disruptions with the fewest restrictions possible.

We will be presenting this update of the [Framework](#) to the Board of Education at their meeting on August 18 in the High School library. This meeting can also be viewed online via Google Live Stream ([click here](#)). In addition, we will be hosting an online community Question and Answer forum on Thursday, August 19 at 7:00pm. ([click here](#)). Viewers for both Live Streams need to sign-in using the following district credentials in order to view the live stream: Username: [meet@bscsd.org](mailto:meet@bscsd.org) and the Password is: livestream

Questions should be sent to [schoolopening@bscsd.org](mailto:schoolopening@bscsd.org) by 4:00pm on Thursday so that we can provide answers to the most common questions within the time that we have. Please put “Forum Question” in the subject line. As subsequent changes are made to our *Framework*, we will present them to the Board and host additional community information sessions as needed. The next presentation is scheduled for September 1, 2021 at 7:00pm.

My continued thanks for your support of our students, our staff, and our programs.

Ken Slentz  
Superintendent of Schools  
Ballston Spa CSD