

Updates from the District Office

September 24, 2021

Dear BSCSD Parents and Caregivers – A few items for your information today, some of which follow up from our letter on September 10:

First, our continued thanks for working together as we close out our second full week of school. I am amazed by and grateful for how quickly students and staff returned to our routines for the year! We continue to learn a great deal about what is working well and where adjustments are still needed in our processes and communications. To help us with our learning, we anticipate releasing our second *ThoughtExchange* on this topic in the week ahead. Thanks very much to the over 1,850 of you who participated in our first *ThoughtExchange* which sought your feedback on how we can improve upon/refine our current school color scheme and our Scottie logo. Of the 908 thoughts shared, the highest rated thought based on 23,208 ratings reflected this – “*I like the idea of having a consistent logo and colors for the district. Brand identity! And a sense of connectedness among the individual schools in the district.*” Again, as we noted in the introduction, neither of these are changing, we are simply seeking a more consistent design across all areas of the District that continues to honor the tradition of the Ballston Spa Scotties.

Second, a few other points of interest for your information today:

1. **Homecoming Spirit Week**: Please see the front page of each of our school’s website for the activities that will be in place for next week as excitement builds towards our Homecoming Football game next Friday night. We are thrilled that we are able to have these activities in place this year and hope to see students, staff, and the community join in the festivities!
2. **Malta Avenue Elementary School Blue Ribbon Award**: As many of you are aware, our Malta Avenue elementary school was recently selected by the United States Department of Education as a [Blue Ribbon School](#)! This is a truly remarkable accomplishment that *very* few schools in NYS get to experience. Our thanks to the students, faculty and staff, parents, and the Malta Ave school community for all of the support that you have given and continue to give our community school! So much tradition to be proud of!!
3. **Communications with the District**: In addition to the use of *ThoughtExchange* as noted above, we are also in the process of updating our website, expanding our use of social media, and revising our newsletter so as to improve our communication both internally and externally. In addition to participating in our *ThoughtExchanges* and our various surveys, we also ask that you assist us in improving what we do by contacting us directly when you have concerns or questions about what is happening in our schools or in the district in general. We want to be sure that we have the opportunity to provide you with all of the necessary information and facts to resolve your concerns. Our contact

information is on the front page of our website and staff can be reached by email using the first initial and last name followed by @bscsd.org. If you are unsure of who to speak to, please call the office of the school or the District office and we will be happy to help you. You can also email us at schoolopening@bscsd.org and we can direct your email to the right person for follow up. I ask this because over the past few weeks we have seen postings, petitions, etc. on social media regarding various issues and concerns with school and district activities. In some instances, we have not been contacted with any inquiries directly related to these concerns and the posted information is inaccurate and even misleading. Please give us the opportunity to provide you with the information that you need. We understand that it may not always be the information that you want and that there will be disagreements, but it is important for us to keep our communication channels as clear as possible and to work with you to come to the best possible resolution. Thank you to those who are using the direct communication route and to all of you for your willingness to assist with this.

4. **Current Positive Cases, Quarantined Students, and Vaccinated Students:** We currently have 15 students and 2 staff who have been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive and an additional 197 students in quarantine. Of the 197, 137 will return by Tuesday, September 28. For students who are vaccinated who are determined to have been in close contact with an infected individual, there may be a “temporary exclusion” (students have to stay home) until such time as they can be cleared based on whether or not they have symptoms of the virus. Those who are not symptomatic will be able to return typically after 1 day. As noted in our September 10 letter, if you would like to know the general rules for how quarantining determinations are made, please see the *Quarantining Process for 2021-2022* document on our [Coping with COVID](#) page.
 - a. *Quarantining Instruction Plan* – As you are aware, the District is not offering a fully remote option this year, but we are utilizing remote learning for students who have been placed into mandatory quarantine due to either being positive for COVID-19 or for having close contact with an infected individual. Based on our experience with this over the past several days, our workgroup met again yesterday to consider revisions to our plan. We will be updating you next week on this in order to ensure that everyone understands how our processes work.
5. **Return to School for Students and Staff:** Just a reminder that for students and staff who are symptomatic and sent home during the day, NYS will require PCR test results to be provided to the school in order for your child to return. Information on this can be found in Section 4 of the [NYS Department of Health Commissioner’s Determination on COVID-19 Testing](#).

Thanks very much and enjoy the weekend!

Ken Slentz
Superintendent of Schools
Ballston Spa Central School District