

Dear Parents and Caregivers (10.27.20)

For this version of the *Updates*, there are ***nine*** important items for your attention as we are in the process of making a number of changes to current processes and procedures.

1. **November 20 Change in Instructional Model (remote to in-person, or in-person to remote) Process** – As an important component of managing our reopening in a way that allowed for as much consistency as possible in our class structures, we asked you to commit to the instructional model of choice - remote or in-person - for your children until November 20. During our reopening plan development, we anticipated reviewing appeals that day and making decisions accordingly. We now believe that this process would likely cause more disruptions than any of us can afford at this time.

With 6 weeks of experience behind us now, we will move from a November 20 appeals day to an ongoing or “rolling” appeals procedure through the next several weeks until December 18. Depending on level – elementary or secondary – this process may look a bit different and we may not be able to accommodate your request right away. Under the rolling appeals process, if your request for a change in instructional model cannot be accommodated immediately, you will be put on a waitlist and contacted once an opportunity becomes available for your child in the model that you prefer. While this may cause some delays in placement of our students, we believe that this will cause the least amount of disruption to our students’ education. Our goal in this process is to ensure that any additional adjustments allow for greater predictability and consistency in our classes while trying to maintain as much flexibility for students and families as we can.

Therefore, if you are interested in a change in instructional program for your child - moving from in-person to remote learning or from remote to in-person learning, please contact your child’s building principal and they will assist you in the process and subsequently notify you of the determination.

2. **Traveling During the Holidays to NYS Advisory States** – We discourage travel to states that are on the NYS Travel Advisory list at this time due to the disruption that it will cause to a student’s education upon their return. If a family still chooses to travel, they must be sure to register with the NYS Department of Health upon their return (register at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>) so that tracers can contact them each day to ensure that family members are symptom-free. Travelers including students will also be required to complete a mandatory 14-day quarantine upon your return. Because this situation is not caused by a positive test or an exposure to a COVID-positive individuals, we do not have the ability for all such students to move out of in-person learning to remote learning for this short period of time due to the disruptions that this can cause. Given the hybrid model that is currently in place in nearly all classes in grades 6-12, students may request permission from the building principal to attend class remotely for the quarantining period. However, because we do not have the hybrid model in place in the majority of our K-5 classes (and those that do have a hybrid model are very carefully balanced), elementary students will instead be provided with materials, resources, and supports that will allow the student to keep pace with the class to the greatest extent possible during the absence. For all students, these arrangements would continue until such time as the quarantine period ends and the student is cleared to return to in-person learning.
3. **Testing and Tracing Impact** - As noted in my last update, we have revised our processes and protocols in our [COVID-19 Protocol for Evaluation of Symptomatic Illness and Testing and Tracing](#) document. We continue to update this document based on situations that arise and our learning from them, as well as on updates and directives from the Department of Health and our District Physician. Please review this document to ensure that you understand what our action steps will be when we are notified of a positive test result from a student or staff member or an exposure of a student or staff member to a COVID-positive individual. In addition, we continue to review our communications protocol to ensure that we are providing as much information as possible while also being sure to protect the health rights of those students and staff involved in

tracing. Moving forward, we will include the name of the school, the status (opened, closed, partially opened, etc.) and what can be expected for next steps from both the District and the Department of Health. Please know that we will not provide any specific information beyond this.

4. **Closure Due to Positive COVID Case and Tracing** – If an entire classroom, building, or all schools must close due to COVID-related reasons, students would move to fully remote instruction the following day. If only certain students who attend an in-person class are required to quarantine, the following steps will be taken:
 1. *K-5, 5 days or less* – the student(s) will be provided with class work materials, resources, and supports that will allow the student to keep pace with the class to the greatest extent possible during the absence.
 2. *K-5, more than 5 days* – the teachers and principal will work to determine the best solution for the student(s).
 3. *6 – 12* – students will participate in classes through remote instruction.
5. **Using Cameras During Google Meet Sessions** – Beginning *Monday, November 2*, all students will be required to have their cameras on during class sessions unless:
 1. The teacher gives permission for “cameras off” or
 2. A parents has permission from the principal to keep their child’s camera off due to specific circumstances which they describe to the principal. In these cases, students must commit to remaining engaged with the teacher as follows:
 1. Responding when called upon without exception,
 2. Responding to questions/prompts in the chat feature of Meet when asked, and
 3. Turning the camera on when both formal and informal assessments are being given.
6. **Election Day Schedule:** On November 3, we are scheduled for a half day of instruction and a half Superintendent Conference Day. As I believe you are all aware now, in order to give everyone the opportunity to maximize instructional time and practice with remote learning, the half instructional day will be fully remote for *all* grades. Building principals have or will be notifying parents of this as well. Regarding voting procedures, please be sure to review the notice sent out by Pam Motler yesterday as the law has changed since last year regarding time off to vote.
7. **Snow Days in the 2020-2021 School Year** – For the coming winter months, our processes will be a bit different than in the past.
 1. ***Weather-related Delay*** – on those mornings where we and our town highway departments need a bit more time to clear our campuses and our roads,
 1. Students in grades 6-12 will be fully remote and will follow their regular schedule for the day and attendance will be taken.
 2. Students in grades K-5 will be on a 1-hour delay for both remote and in-person learning and attendance will be taken.
 2. ***Weather-related Closure*** – While full closure will remain an option,
 1. ***Advanced Notice*** – on those days where the weather is such that we are able to announce a closure the day/evening before, we *may* utilize a fully remote, ***synchronous*** (*students are learning with the teacher via Google Meet*) schedule depending on whether power is available in all parts of the District. Students would attend according to the regular schedule for the day and attendance will be taken.
 2. ***“Morning of” Notice*** – on days where we have to make the call by 6:00am, we *may* utilize a fully remote, ***asynchronous*** (*students are learning independently student work without the teacher using assignments on Schoology*) schedule depending on whether power is available in all parts of the District. Additional details will be forthcoming on this option.

Our closure announcement on TV, the website, and School Messenger would include this information as well as BOCES, ECHS P-TECH and Parochial School information. We will also be sure to note the difference between school closure and District closure so as to be clear regarding who must be on our campuses that day.

8. **Improving Consistency in Communications** – With our dependence on email as our major form of communication continuing to grow, we want to be as efficient as possible while also giving families as great a degree of predictability as possible as to when communications can be expected. Therefore, beginning the week of Monday, November 2, the following communications processes will take place:
 1. K-5 Parent/Caregiver Information – All **new** information coming from the elementary schools will be sent on Thursdays.
 2. 6-12 Parent/Caregiver Information – All new information coming from the middle and high schools will be sent on Wednesdays.
 3. District Office Communication – This information will be sent out on Fridays.

While ***reminders may periodically be sent on other days***, all new information will follow this process.

9. **School Lunch Updates** – Beginning Monday November 2nd the school lunch program at all elementary schools will undergo several changes. These changes are being made to address issues incurred during the past several weeks. Your patience is appreciated during these challenging times.
 1. *Parent Meal Order Forms* – The meal order form sent home with students will no longer be necessary. Students will order their lunch meals during breakfast each day.
 2. *Breakfast* – There will be one choice each day for breakfast. This meal will include the entrée, a portion of fruit or juice, and milk. No advance ordering is necessary.
 3. *Lunch* – For lunch there will be a hot and cold option available daily. The main entrée will rotate each day and will include the entrée, a vegetable, fresh fruit, and milk. The second option will be the bagel/yogurt meal which includes a vegetable, fruit and milk as well. As mentioned, this will be ordered by students during breakfast.

All meals will be free for all students throughout the school year and milk is available for purchase (charged to student accounts) and/or is available free with meals.

Should you have any questions about this information, please do not hesitate to let us know via our school opening email box at schoolopening@bscsd.org.

On behalf of all of, thanks very much for your ongoing support.

Ken

Ken Slentz

Superintendent of Schools