

## **Updates from the District Office**

December 3, 2021

Dear BSCSD Parents and Caregivers – A few items for your information today.

1. **Student Activities at Ballston Spa** – Despite the many challenges that we are current facing with the continuation of the pandemic and all that it is bringing us, I hope that you will continue to check in with your children, take an occasional look at our website and social media platforms, and attend or tune in to one of our athletic or music events to be reminded of the many, many positive things that are happening in our schools this year. Having our students back in-person has made such a difference for us. We are grateful for your continued support and understanding as we continue to make adjustments to ensure that our kids can *remain* in school to the greatest extent possible. Below you will see some of the upcoming adjustments that we are working on to allow for this to happen.
2. **COVID Updates**
  - a. **Increase in Positive Cases and Quarantines** – As you have seen in the media and on our [COVID tracker](#) on our website, the number of positive cases continues to climb as do the number of students who are quarantined as a result of close contact with an infected individual. We continue to monitor these numbers carefully in line with our [Reopening Plan](#) so as to make decisions that maximize the health and safety of our students and staff while also maximizing in-person learning for our students. One question that continues to be raised in this regard is whether the District will switch to fully remote learning. Again, as stated in our plan, while we may have to move individual classes to remote learning based on the number of students or staff impacted, we do not envision a scenario at this time where we would move to fully remote instruction.
  - b. **Quarantining Mitigation Efforts** –
    - i. *Test-to-Stay* – After the holiday break we anticipate being able to begin this program that has recently been piloted in the South Glens Falls School District. Once we have it in place, students who have been exposed to a positive case but do not have any symptoms may, with parent permission, participate in testing three times per week. So long as these test results continue to be negative, students will be allowed to stay in school. More to come in our next *Updates*!
    - ii. *Distancing of Students* – Where we are able to, we are rearranging our eating spaces for students to create six feet of distancing between them so as to lessen the numbers of “close contacts” to a positive case of COVID-19 and who are quarantined as a result.
    - iii. *Asymptomatic Students* – This afternoon we received an update from the NYS Department of Health on changes to the rules for testing of students who are

currently sent home due to having [COVID symptoms](#). We are reviewing this information now and hope to have good news to share with you next week that will lessen the burden on families and decrease the amount of time that students are missing in-person learning.

- iv. *Vaccinations* – Students who are fully vaccinated and who do not have COVID-19 symptoms are not required to quarantine if they are in close contact to a positive case. Our current vaccination status is as follows:

- 1. BSpa students ages 5-11:
  - a. 3% are fully vaccinated
  - b. 27% have received a first dose
- 2. BSpa students ages 12+:
  - a. 63% are fully vaccinated
  - b. 3% have received a first dose

**If you are interested in finding options for vaccination for your child, please see the information on our [Coping with COVID](#) webpage.**

- 3. **School Safety and Security** – The incident at Oxford High School in Michigan this week where four students were killed by a fellow student is a stark reminder that we must continue to give close attention to our students who are struggling for a variety of reasons; must still say something to school personnel or law enforcement as quickly as possible if something is seen or heard that raises safety concerns for our students and staff; and must be sure that our children do not have easy access to weapons in our homes, at a relative's home, or in general. None of us ever wants to experience what the families of those four students are going through right now and so we must continue to work together to keep our schools, students, staff, and community safe.
- 4. **Employment Opportunities at BSCSD** – The District is seeking individuals to work at the district in a variety of positions. Currently openings are available for Teaching Assistants, School Aides, Special Education Aides, Cleaners and School Bus Drivers. Additional information is on our website – click [HERE](#) - or call (518) 884-7195 ext. 1398.
- 5. **The Scottie Scoop** – For common questions, concerns, and in response to various social media posts and correspondence that we receive, we have started [The Scottie Scoop](#) in which we provide answers and references to resources to better ensure that our conversations remain informed and fact-based. Please visit this site each week for updates and utilize our form for submitting questions or concerns that you might have.
- 6. **Malta Food Fest** – The **3rd Annual Malta Food Fest** will be held on **Wednesday, December 8, 2021** at TEC-SMART in Malta. Similar to the last event it will be a "grab and go" format with pickup times available from 4:30pm-7:00pm. Each ticket is \$30 and will include enough to feed a family of four. A silent auction of gift baskets, donated items and gift certificates will also be held

virtually as part of the evening's activities. The **Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce** partners with the **district** and **Hudson Valley Community College's TEC-SMART** to present the Malta Food Fest annually. Proceeds from the event will benefit the school district's [Ballston Spa Partnership for Innovation in Education Fund](#) and the many amazing programs it financially supports. Learn more on our website and/or use [this link to purchase](#) tickets in advance.

7. **Winter Concerts in our Schools** - The Music Department is presenting several winter concerts during the upcoming weeks. Some scheduling changes have been made so please check the website for the final details. An additional Special Concert featuring the **7th Grade Band, Concert Band and Wind Ensemble** was added on December 9<sup>th</sup> here in the auditorium. Additional Middle and High School concerts follow on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. All the BSCSD elementary winter concerts have been rescheduled in March 2022.

Thanks again and enjoy the weekend.

Ken

Ken Slentz  
Superintendent of Schools

[www.bscsd.org](http://www.bscsd.org)